GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:136
ANSWERED ON:09.12.2004
DEVELOPMENT OF SCs
Prasad Shri Hari Kewal;Vasava Shri Mansukhbhai D.

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the people belonging to SCs are living below the poverty line;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to strictly enforce the laws for development of SCs and bringing them at par with the people of other castes; and

(d) the extent of success achieved by the Government in its efforts?

Answer

MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SMT. MEIRA KUMAR)

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred in reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 136 for 9-12-2004 by Shri Mansukhbhai D. Vasava and Shri Harikewal Prasad, M.Ps regarding development of SCs

(a) and (b): As per estimates of poverty made by the Planning Commission for the year 1999- 2000, 36.25% of rural and 38.47% of urban Scheduled Caste population was living below poverty line;

(c) and (d): Government has taken several steps for the development of Scheduled Castes so as to bring them at par with other communities. Important measures include the following:

(i) In order to give a greater thrust to the development of Scheduled Castes, the State Governments and Central Ministries have been asked to implement special plan namely Special Component Plan (SCP) for Scheduled Castes under which plan funds of the States/Central Ministries in proportion to the population of Scheduled Castes are to be earmarked for spending exclusively on the welfare and development of Scheduled Castes;

(ii) Special Central Assistance is being provided to States and UTs as an additive to their SCP;

(iii) The National Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Corporation is providing loan at concessional rate of interest to the Scheduled Castes;

(iv) Under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, 49% Share Capital is released to State level Scheduled Caste Development Corporations (SCDCs) which are providing loans at concessional rate of interest and margin money to Scheduled Caste families for undertaking various economic activities;

(v) Besides, the Government is also implementing special schemes like Post Matric Scholarship, Pre-matric Scholarship for the children of those engaged in unclean occupations, Hostels for Scheduled Caste boys and girls, upgradation of merit of Scheduled Caste students and Dr. Ambedkar National Scholarship scheme for the educational development of Scheduled Castes;

(vi) In order to supplement the efforts of the Government, the Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are being assisted for undertaking different programmes/activities for the welfare and development of Scheduled Castes.

(vii) Reservation is provided for Scheduled Castes in Government services, public sector undertakings and in educational institutions;

(viii) The National Commission for Scheduled Castes has been set up under Article 338 of the Constitution. The functions of the Commission include investigation, monitoring and evaluation of various safeguards provided for Scheduled Castes, inquiry into specific complaints with respect to deprivation of rights and safeguards of Scheduled Castes and participation in the planning process;

(ix) In furtherance of Article 17 of the Constitution abolishing untouchability and forbidding its practice in any form, the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 has been enacted to enforce the Constitutional provision. Further, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 has also been enacted to prevent the commission of offences of atrocities against the members of the Scheduled Castes, to provide for Special Courts for trial of such offences and for the relief and rehabilitation of the victims of such offences.

(x) Government has enacted `The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993`, as a measure to eradicate manual scavenging and a National Action Plan has been formulated to end this practice by 2007.

Through the governmental efforts, the number of SC families enabled to cross the poverty line has been increased. There has been an increase in representation in services and literacy rates.